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WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today spoke on the House floor regarding Republican attempts to wrest control of ballast water standards from the states.

In part she said:

"The Republican majority earlier this year passed HR 2018 which gave power to states to decide whether or not they should follow the guidelines set forth by the EPA to regulate pollution from mountaintop mining. But when it comes to ballast water, suddenly we think it's the federal government not the states must have the final say.

"This inconsistency and war against the EPA is causing great consternation in the country.

"The only consistent logic in the approach is that in both instances they are advocating the interests of respective industries, not the interest of the American people."

The full text of the speech is below.

Video of the speech can be found here: <http://youtu.be/esWv7KXzRW8> .

Full Text of Slaughter's floor speech

Mr. Speaker,

The Republican majority's placed the house in a terrible bind this morning. They have taken a worthy bill to authorize the Coast Guard which enjoys broad bipartisan support and tied it together with an unwise, unrelated, misguided bill that will severely limit the ability of states to fight the harmful invasive species that are destroying local ecosystems and disrupting local economies.

In the majority's Pledge to America, leaders of the House promised we will advance major legislation one issue at a time. And this pledge is broken yet again today by this bill we are debating.

Ship born ballast discharge has introduced approximately 180 non-indigenous, invasive species to the great lakes which comprise 20% of the fresh water on this planet, and as long as I have been privileged to serve in Congress, members on both sides of the aisle have vigorously protected it.

In fact, during the debate on NAFTA, we discovered along with our Canadian friends that the Great Lakes water was to be sold along with any other trade agreements to other parts of the country that had shortages of water. We all banded together and had that part removed. We do have an obligation to save 20% of the planet's fresh water, which is becoming more and more scarce every day.

Nationally more than 4,500 invasive species have been introduced. In total they cost billions of dollars on an annual basis. \$5 billion alone has been spent to try to deal with the European zebra mussel which we have made barely any inroads against. It was introduced in the Great Lakes and can be found by the thousands throughout the lakes. They attach to the hard surfaces so thickly that they clog the municipal water systems and electric generation plants costing over \$1 billion a year to control.

States know all too well the dangerous threat of invasive species and are taking common sense action. But today's bill destroys the work by taking away the right of the states to have control.

We must allow states who have an equal voice in protecting their ecosystems and economies if we are truly to solve the threat of invasive species in our waters.

Despite the unique challenges facing each state, the majority's demanding all states follow one set of federal requirements. This approach is completely different from the one taken by the congressional Republicans when we were debating regulation that would affect mountaintop mining corporation that could take off the top of the mountain and throw it down in the valley oftentimes clogging up the water supply.

The Republican majority earlier this year passed HR 2018 which gave power to states to decide whether or not they should follow the guidelines set forth by the EPA to regulate pollution from mountaintop mining. But when it comes to ballast water, suddenly we think it's the federal government not the states must have the final say.

This inconsistency and war against the EPA is causing great consternation in the country.

The only consistent logic in the approach is that in both instances they are advocating the interests of respective industries, not the interest of the American people. I urge my colleagues to oppose today's rule and the underlying bill. And I reserve the balance of my time.